

2nd Annual U.S. Embassy Teacher Academy 2004:
Re-Writing America: Multi-Ethnic Perspectives in Literature and the Media
Blaubeuren, November 18-21, 2004

Workshop: Youth and Identity in Music Video, Film, and Literature

Teaching Sequence

- Music Video “Black or White” by Michael Jackson
 - o “It don’t matter if you’re Black or White” *intro*
 - o Does it?

- Research “Ethnicity”
 - o data on income, education etc. *macro*
 - o Presentation

- Texts “Personal voices”
 - The New Negro *micro*
 - Red Velvet Dress
 - What Means Switch
 - Mericans
 - ...
 - o ethnic markers
 - o perspectives

- Talk Show
 - o combining macro and micro level *condensation*
 - o objectives:
 - multi-stressors
 - diversity in ethnicity

Text I
The New Negro – by Darryl Pinckney

“It don’t matter if you’re black or white”
Does it?

1st Pre-reading activity

- selected quotations from the text

“There was nothing to be afraid of as long as we were polite and made good grades.”

“After all the future [...] belonged to us, the Also Chosen.”

“All men were created equal, but even so, lots of mixed messages with sharp teeth waited under my Roy Rogers pillow.”

“...you had to be close to perfect just to break even.”

“You were not an immigrant, there were no foreign accents, weird holidays, or funny foods to live down, [...] still you did not belong to the great beyond out there;”

“You had nothing to be ashamed of...”

- Black or white person talking? Give reasons.
 - transition: introducing the first sentence
- “No one sat me down and told me I was a Negro.”

2nd While-reading activity

- finding out the ethnic markers in the text
- text without the title is handed out

3rd Post-reading activity

- “Does it matter...?”
 - o multi-stressors
- speculating on the title and its background

Text II

Red Velvet Dress – by Naomi Shihab Nye

“It don’t matter if you’re black or white”
Does it?

1st Pre-reading activity

- “*Could we see the Arab?*” – “*We don’t have one.*”
- Create a context for this little dialogue.

2nd While-reading activity

- Describe the neighbourhood. How is cultural diversity portrayed?
- Black or White – does it matter?

3rd Post-reading activity

- Give reasons for her individual approach towards cultural diversity on the basis of her autobiography (Writers on America, p. 54).

4th Creative

- Prepare a presentation for your class. Choose two crucial scenes in order to act them out.
- On the basis of your analysis write the subtext to the above scenes.

Text III

What Means Switch – by Gish Jen

“It don’t matter if you’re black or white”
Does it?

1st Pre-reading activities

- If you were an exchange student, what would you tell people about your cultural background?
- Read the title. What does “switch” mean? What kind of story do you expect?

2nd Post-reading activities

- After reading the story, has your understanding of the title changed? Why (not)?
- Mona writes a letter to her old friends in Yonkers, in which she expresses her feelings about her new neighbourhood.
- Before Sherman wrote the one-sentence letter he had a longer version, which he threw away.

3rd Creative

- Imagine the story has been transformed into a movie. Create the trailer:
 - o as a storyboard or
 - o act it or
 - o film it.